

## ***IN THE SPECIFICATION***

Please replace paragraph 20 with:

**[0020]** FIG. 2 depicts in block diagram form an exemplary environment in which an embodiment of the present invention can be used. Network 120 is capable of transmitting signals of varying protocols and formats (e.g., SONET, SDH, passive optical network and/or gigabit Ethernet). User 100 is coupled to network 120 using an embodiment of the present invention in transponder 200, which is described in more detail below. User 150 is coupled, for example, to network 120 by use of a transponder 202, which is a duplicate of transponder 200. In this example, users 100 and 150 represent entities that pay for use of network 120 ~~150~~. The network 120 is capable of transmitting signals from user 100 to a variety of users, such as users 170 and 180 through respective transponders 165 and 175.